

January 22, 1999

1999 NYS Hort Show a Snowy Success

by Linda McCandless

ROCHESTER, NY: New York fruit growers are accustomed to dealing with sun, rain and wind, but the weather for last week's 1999 annual meeting of the New York State Horticultural Society (NYSHS) was a little daunting unless you were from Buffalo. Growers from Erie County were only too happy to escape the six-foot snow drifts in their apple orchards to tackle the sleet and snow that central New York had to offer.



Mike Durando (left, president of the NY Apple Association, talks apples with Dan Donahue (right), exec. director of the NYSHS.

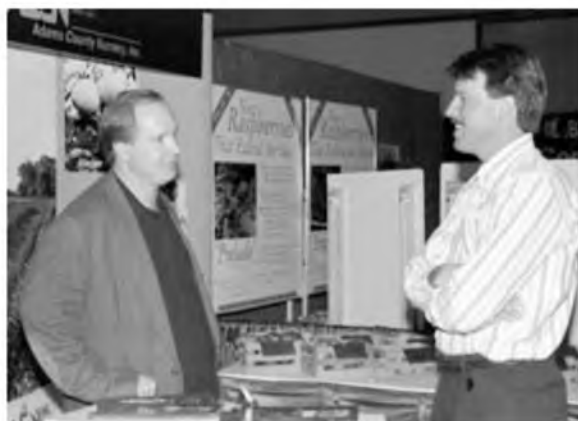
"Weather was a major factor," said NYSHS Executive Director, Dan Donahue. "Of the 340 people preregistered, we were down 30 percent in attendance on Wednesday and Thursday, and the walk-in traffic was not what it usually is. On Friday we were lucky to have a roof, because it was leaking severely in the restaurant. But, on the positive side, the rooms were full for the all-day grape varieties and clones seminars and the three-day Lake Ontario Tree Fruit School (LOFT)."

Donahue was also enthusiastic about the turnout for the produce industry seminar. Discussion revolved around new developments in NAFTA, the ag export and Brazilian currency crises, and marketing and promotion programs that work for California growers.



Bill Johnson (center), apple rootstock breeder with the NYSAES Horticultural Sciences Department and with the USDA, talks to Kathy Wafler Madison (right) of Wolcott, NY.

Another positive development was the formation of a new fruit industry association called the Northeast Stone Fruit Sponsors (NESFS). The association will represent all tender fruits, including sweet cherries, tart cherries, peaches, prunes, plums, and apricots and provide the mechanism for producers in the Maryland-Maine-Ohio growing triangle to be able to get the information growers need to profitably produce and market tender (stone) fruit in the Northeast.



Craig Telgheder (left) of Adams County Nursery, Inc., talks to Kevin Maloney (right) of the NYSAES Horticultural Sciences Department about last year's raspberry releases.

Vinifera Grapes

About 75 grape growers and winemakers attended the sessions on vinifera grape varieties and clones organized by viticulturist Robert Pool and enologist Thomas Henick-Kling, from the New York State Agricultural Experiment Station (NYSAES) , in Geneva, NY. Pool and Henick-Kling highlighted 20 years of Cornell University research exploring the use of modern European clones of the major *Vitis vinifera* classic premium grape varieties in the Northeast. They also offered a tasting of 11 wines from NYSAES vinifera trials.

Mike Cunningham reported on how the Foundation Plant Materials Service program functions in importing, quarantining, testing, cleaning and certifying new grape varieties.

A new, regional cooperative effort between Cornell, the region's premium wineries, and the major nurseries was also unveiled. Pool and Henick-Kling will coordinate commercial evaluation of improved selections of vinifera throughout the region by providing growers with plant material to field test. Every winery in the Northeast is invited to participate. This initiative was made possible by a grant from the Viticulture Consortium, a federal grant program.

"The importance of Geneva as a regional and state resource for the New York grape and wine industry is widely recognized," said Pool. For further information, check out the Cornell Grape World Wide Web pages at: <http://www.nysaes.cornell.edu/hort/>.

LOFT Fruit Schools*

For the third year in a row, the Western New York Fruit Schools served as the backbone of the educational program for the NYS Hort Show. This year the fruit school featured Alan Jones and Randy Beaudry from Michigan State University, and Gerry Walker and Len Troup representing OMFRA and the Tender Fruit Industry of Ontario, Canada. The two and one-half day program included comprehensive information on new apple varieties, stone fruit culture, insect and disease management and control, tree vigor management, as well as business and labor management. The concurrent Employee Program offered the opportunity for Pesticide Certification Training. Cornell Cooperative Extension continues to provide the fruit growers of New York with the latest in research-based information.

*** NOTE TO TRADE PUBLICATION EDITORS:** A related story entitled "[Tree Fruit Reports from the 1999 NYS Hort Show](#)" details the take-home message of the fruit schools offered at the NYS Hort Show.

Note to Editors: 300 ppi versions of the photos are available by clicking on the above versions. If you would prefer hard copies, contact Rob Way at 315-787-2357 or rhw2@cornell.edu

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